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KT photo | **Tim Bath**

House of Burgess: Thanks for memories, Kokomo

After 288 columns, time to say goodbye

By Rob Burgess
Tribune columnist

After 288 weekly columns, it is my duty to inform you this will be my final House of Burgess for the Kokomo Tribune. I've met some amazing people during my time here, readers and coworkers. It's safe to say I'll never forget any of you.

In the five years, seven months and one day since I started working here. I've grown so much both personally and professionally. Over time, my job title has only expanded. I was hired here in 2012 as night editor, I joined the Editorial

Board in 2014, became City Editor in 2016, and was named Opinion Page Editor earlier this year. Also, during that time, my wife, Ash, and I have become parents twice; first to our son, Harper, in 2014, and again this year to our daughter, Emerald.

During my tenure I also became an award-winning journalist no less than a half-dozen times over. Most recently, I was part of our 2017 Indiana Associated Press Media Editors Division II third-place staff award for Best Spot News Coverage. And, I just found out I, along with the dynamic husband-and-wife duo of Kelly Lafferty Gerber and Carson Gerber, won 2017 Hoosier State Press Association Awards, as well. The Kokomo Tribune also won a staff award for Best News Coverage Under Deadline Pressure. (The three of us won't know specifically what we won until the Dec. 2 Newsroom Seminar and Better Newspaper Contest Awards Luncheon at the Indianapolis Marriott North, but I'm thrilled.)

Writing for a living always feels like getting away with something. I've always felt deep down this is what I'm meant to do, that it's my calling. Still, it's a pretty sweet deal, one which I don't take for granted for a second.

My position here at the paper has given me the opportunity to interview people whom I never thought I'd get a chance to talk to, including: Patton Oswalt, Dan Savage, Emo Philips, Gov. Gary Johnson, Chaz Ebert, Doug Benson, "Freeway" Rick Ross, David Anspaugh, Jimmy Pardo and Marc Levin, just to name a few. I had the chance to meet President Bill Clinton not once, but twice. (During our second encounter at the Cone Palace, Clinton told Tribune reporter George Myers I had a "good hat" when I took their picture together.)

Before I leave, there's one thing I want to make sure I say. It's the same thing I have always said in each of my Best of the Year columns each December: Thank you for reading.

I mean it.

And, not just those of you who have agreed with me. (Though, I do appreciate all the lovely compliments I've received over the years.)

Yes, I'm even talking to you, haters. And, don't even lie, either; you'll miss me most of all. Don't think I haven't noticed haters watch closer than even the biggest fan ever could. I see you.

Because, even if I've received the nastiest, hate-filled email in response to one of my columns, I always make sure to at least respond with that sentiment: Thank you for reading. And, that's not me trying to be trite, either. It may seem mundane, but it is still amazing to me that I can have a thought, write it down, submit it, and then have it reproduced in newsprint thousands of times before reaching someone else who has a reaction they felt so strongly they needed to inform me of it. If I wrote something and the result was you having an original thought of your own, well, my job here is more than done. The circle is complete.

Again, thank you for reading.

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